

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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S E C R E T SANA 1501

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, YE
SUBJECT: YARG MILITARY ACTION AGAINST TRIBES?

REFERENCE: SANA 1490 AND SANA 1345

BEGIN SUMMARY: IN WAKE OF AL-HAJRI'S ASSASSINATION, WE
SHOULD TALK TO SAUDIS ABOUT YEMEN. YARG FRUSTRATIONS AND
ANGER WITH TRIBAL AND LEFTIST OPPONENTS IN NORTH ARE
BECOMING EXPLOSIVE. END SUMMARY.

1. REFTELS OUTLINE GROWING CONCERN OF YAR PRESIDENT AND
FOREIGN MINISTER WITH PROBLEMS TRIBAL FORCES ARE CREATING
FOR YARG AND ITS RELATIONS WITH KINGDOM. BOTH BELIEVE THAT
SOME PARTS OF SAG, AT LEAST, ARE DOING NOTHING TO DIS-
COURAGE INSURRECTION WHICH HAS CLOSED ROADS NORTH OF SANA
TO GOVERNMENT TRAFFIC. SOME OTHER YEMENIS IN HIGH PLACES
BELIEVE THAT SAG IS STILL WED TO POLICY OF HOLDING YARG
HOSTAGE TO ARMED TRIBES. FOR THIS REASON AS WELL AS TO
CREATE FUBBER BETWEEN SAUDI ARABIA AND LEFTIST YEMEN,
SAUDIS ARE SAID BY THESE FIGURES (CF AHMAD ABDU SAID,
BUT NOT PRESIDENT OR FORMIN) TO BE PAYING MONEY TO
CERTAIN TRIBAL FIGURES.

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2. BOTH PRESIDENT AND FOREIGN MINISTER HAVE
SAID INSURRECTION IN NORTH IS INTOLERABLE TO GOVERN-
MENT AND, WITHOUT BEING CLEAR, BOTH HAVE SUGGESTED
THAT GOVERNMENT MAY HAVE TO TAKE STRONG MEASURES
AGAINST CERTAIN TRIBES OR TRIBAL FIGURES.

3. MEASURE OF SERIOUSNESS OF THESE COMMENTS IS THAT, FOR FIRST TIME IN MONTHS, BOTH PRESIDENT AND FOREIGN MINISTER HAVE REQUESTED WE TALK TO SAUDIS. THEY WANT US TO ALLAY BASELESS SAUDI FEARS OF YARG, END ANY IMPLICIT (MUCH LESS EXPLICIT) SUPPORT WHICH SAUDIS MAY BE GIVING TO TRIBES IN REVOLT AGAINST GOVERNMENT, AND WARN SAUDIS THAT YARG CANNOT INDEFINITELY ACCEPT CHALLENGE FROM NORTH WITHOUT RESPONDING.

4. CONCERN THAT GOVERNMENT REACTION MAY BE NEAR AT HAND AND COULD SERIOUSLY COMPLICATE SUADI-YEMENI RELATIONS HAS PROBABLY INCREASED SINCE ASSASSINATION OF HAJRI IN LONDON. YEMENIS ARE BLAMING SINAN ABU LUHUM GROUP (INCLUDING BROTHER-IN-LAW MUHSIN AL-AYNI, OTHER OUSTED POLITICIANS AND OFFICERS LIKE DIRHAM AND ALI AL-IRYANI, HUSAYN AL-MASWARI, ETC) THEY HAVE SOME RPT SOME CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE OF INVOLVEMENT THIS GROUP IN ASSASSINATION PLANNING. ALL BUT SINAN ARE OUT OF COUNTRY, OF COURSE; SINAN IS IN HIS TRIBAL AREA ABOUT 40 KILIMETERS FROM SANA, IN TERRITORY WHICH GOVERNMENT FORCES, AT PRESENT, CANNOT ENTER UNLESS THEY ARE WILLING TO USE FORCE.

5. THE LATTER MAKES THEM ESPECIALLY MAD. THEY SEE THE CLEVER AND UNSCRUPULOUS SINAN ABU LUHUM (FROM THE UNIMPORTANT BAKIL TRIBE OF NAHM) USING GRIEVANCES OF THE MORE POWERFUL BUT NOT TOO BRIGHT ABDALLAH BIN HUSAYN AL-AHMAR, HEAD OF HASHID CONFEDERATION, TO SHELTER LEFTIST CHALLENGE TO REGIME.

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6. YARG WANTS TO GET AT BOTH LUHUMISTS AND AT TRIBES -- LEFTIST AND RIGHTIST FORCES -- BUT NOT TAKE ON BOTH AT ONCE. HENCE ASNAJ'S PLEA (TO US) TO GET AL-AHMAR OUT OF COUNTRY.

7. YARG MAY RPT MAY -- WE HAVEN'T BEEN TOLD IN SO MANY WORDS -- BE PLANNING SOME MILITARY ACTION IN NORTH, EITHER AS SHOW OF STRENGTH, OR TO ARREST SINAN, OR TO OPEN CERTAIN ROADS. THEY HAVE BEEN UNNERVED BY HAJRI ASSASSINATION. THEY DON'T KNOW IF IT IS FIRST OF SERIES, OR MERELY ISOLATED EFFORT TO FORCE REGIME TO REACT UNWISELY, TO STRAIN RELATIONS WITH KINGDOM TO NORTH OR PDRY TO SOUTH, TO DISCREDIT STRENGTH AND PRESTIGE OF YARG.

8. IN ANY CASE, WHILE I DON'T THINK WE SHOULD TAKE UP SUGGESTION OF ASNAJ -- ASK SAUDIS TO REMOVE ABDALLAH FROM SCENE -- I DO THINK WE SHOULD REVIEW

EVENTS HERE WITH SAUDIS. THIS IS CONSISTENT WITH REQUEST OF PRESIDENT AND WITH OUR OCCASIONAL BUT VERY IMPORTANT INTERLOCUTOR ROLE HERE. NEED TO DO SO IS INCREASED BY RETURN OF SAUDI AMBASSADOR TO SANA, MAN WHO OPENLY DISLIKES AND MISREPRESENTS HAMDI AND YARG.

9. WHAT I PROPOSE IS FOR US TO PASS ON ASNAJ'S AND HAMDI'S GREAT CONCERN ABOUT DETERIORATION OF SECURITY IN NORTH AND SUSPICIONS THAT SINAN GROUP IS NORTHERN TRIBES AGAINST NOT JUST YARG BUT RE-ORIENTATION OF YARG TOWARD SAUDIS. ASNAJ'S CASE IN SANA 1490 PARA 3, 4 AND 5 IS PERSUASIVE TO ME; AND SAUDIS PROBABLY NEED TO HEAR THIS SIDE OF STORY AS ANTIDOTE TO POSSIBLE OTHER REPORTING OF SUDAIRI CLAN AMBASSADOR IN SANA.

10. WE SHOULD SAY, AS WE HAVE IN PAST, THAT IN OUR VIEW HAMDI IS NOT LEFTIST OR COMMUNIST, BUT HE IS
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NATIONALIST WHO WANTS BUILD MODERN STATE. UNLIKE ANY OTHER YEMENI LEADER IN MEMORY, HE SEES SAUDI CONNECTION AS ONE OF OVERRIDING IMPORTANCE, AN HE HAS ACCORDINLY REORIENTED POLITICS OF HIS COUNTRY. THERE REALLY ISN'T ANY ROOM IN HIS CONCEPTION O YEMEN FOR TRIBES WHICH CUT ROADS (ANY MORE THAN THERE IS IN SAUDI CONCEPTION OF KINGDOM). WE THINK SAUDI DECISION TO ESPOUSE HAMDI'S POLICY OF NATION-BUILDING IS SIRENGTHENED AND ALREADY SUCCESSFUL. IT WILL PAY DIVIDENDS HERE AND IN SOUTH YEMEN, TO DETRIMENT OF SOVIETS AND ARAB RADICALS. AT SAME TIME, TO EXTENT THAT SAUDIS APPEAR, OR IN FACT ACT TO SUPPORT TRIBES AGAINST STATE, THEY REISK ALIENATING HAMDI AND MODERNISTS AND PLAYING INTO HANDS OF LEFT. IMPORTANT THING IS THAT WE ARE AT SCUH CRUCIAL POINT RIGHT NOW. SUADIS SHOULD ACTIVELY DISCOURAGE REVOLT OF AL-AHMAR (IF NOT ASK HIM TO LEAVE COUNTRY) AND SHOULD FIND SOME WAY -- NOT THROUGH LOCAL SAUDI AMBASSADOR -- TO REASSURE HAMDI AND COMPANY. WE AMERICANS CAN USEFULLY WEIGH IN AT THIS POINT IN PARALLEL WITH SAUDIS TO URGE YEMENIS NOT RPT NOT TO TAKE RASH MILITARY ACTIONS AGAINST TRIBES, ACTIONS THAT MIGHT BOG DOWN GOVERNMENT IN COSTLY SHOOTING WAR.

11. WE WILL PUSH YARG HARD TO RESTRAIN ITSELF. NEVERTHELESS, WE HOPE SAUDIS WILL CONCLUDE, AS WE DO, THAT BEYOND MILITARY RESTRAINT, WE ALL HAVE COMMON INTEREST IN SEEING FREINDLY YARG EXTEND ITS AUTHORITY AND SOURCES TO ALL PARTS OF YEMEN, EVEN IN THE NORTH.
SCOTES

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